Police May Have Data To Back Claim of FBI Informant in Killing

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Police sources here say they had information that might support Gary Thomas Rowe Jr.'s contention that he killed a black man during racial unrest in Birmingham in 1963 while Rowe was on the FBI's payroll as a Ku Klux Klan informer.

The sources said a former Klansman and another man described as a Klan sympathizer told the police, in separate accounts, that Rowe had boasted to them that "I shot some niggers" during rioting that followed a double bombing in a black neighborhood.

A Birmingham police officer has also told city investigators he saw Rowe with a pistol stuck in his belt near a police barricade such as the one described by Rowe in his account of the killing.

The investigators are now combing police files here for a missing report they believe contains information about at least three unsolved shootings during the 1963 disturbances.

Meanwhile, another document has come to light that may add to the growing controversy over Rowe's involvement in racial violence while he was getting monthly payments from the FBI. In a statement to a Senate investigator in 1975, Rowe accused John Doar, former assistant attorney general for civil rights, of forcing him to change his account of the killing of Viola G. Liuzzo in 1965.

In the interview, Rowe said federal investigators ignored his report that a black man was also killed in Liuzzo's car when Rowe and three Birmingham Klansmen chased down the Detroit woman's automobile on the night after she took part in a civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery.

Rowe further alleged that Doar ordered him to keep silent when Rowe told government prosecutors he could not positively identify a black man called as a key government witness as having been in the car with Liuzzo at the time of the shooting.

Doar, contacted at his law office in New York, refused to discuss Rowe's allegations, saying a Justice Department inquiry into Rowe's activities was the proper forum for such questions.